

## *Need to Contact SAFER?*

*If you have questions or comments about SAFER, please contact the SAFER Deployment Coordinator at:*

*e-mail: **PROJECT\_SAFER@CPQM.SAIC.COM***

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## *Cost Allocation of SAFER Examined*

*Several interested parties have asked about the cost of using SAFER. As part of the deployment plan, cost allocation strategies were examined. The article on page 3 summarizes those strategies.*

### **Volume 1, Number 2: Spring 1997**

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The SAFER Report is intended to provide users (and potential users) of the Safety and Fitness Electronic Records (SAFER) system with information regarding SAFER, its uses, its functions and its benefits.

To be a useful tool, however, user input is essential. If you have any questions or comments regarding this publication, please contact the SAFER Deployment Coordinator:

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# **SAFER REPORT**

## ***THE WORLD WIDE WEB GETS A SAFER PLACE***

The advent of the SAFER system allows motor carrier information that used to be transferred via telephone requests and hard-copy paper reports to be transferred electronically. One benefit of such an approach is the ability to access that information using several different methods. For example, the ability to query interstate carrier safety records is now available to internet users at the SAFER Home Page.

In order to access SAFER Home Page, a connection to the internet is required through an internet service provider. An appropriate web browser is also required; Netscape Navigator 3.x and Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.x are recommended. Other browsers may appear to be working properly, but may return unpredictable or incorrect results. The SAFER Home Page provides additional up-to-date information on web browser support.

**Carrier information is  
now available at the  
SAFER Home Page.  
Visit the site at:**

***<http://www.safersys.org>***

The SAFER Home Page can be reached at <http://www.safersys.org>.

The site currently provides access to carrier snapshots, which are electronic records of a carrier's identification, commodity information and safety record. A safety rating and out-of-service inspection information are also provided if available for that carrier. All of the information displayed using the internet query is public information that has always been available under the Freedom of Information Act. These snapshots are currently available free of charge. Other functions will be available for a fee at a later date.

The SAFER database can be queried using the carrier's DOT number, ICC number, or the carriers name. A sample snapshot is also available to illustrate how the system works. The SAFER Home Page provides links to other sites, including FHWA's home page and the SAFER Deployment Coordinator. Some frequently asked questions about the SAFER Home Page are answered on page 4.

## *INTEGRATING STATE SYSTEMS INTO SAFER*

A number of state agencies have expressed concern regarding the inability to access intrastate carrier, vehicle, and driver safety and credential information via state legacy systems in the development and implementation of SAFER. FHWA/OMC has responded to these concerns by incorporating within the CVISN architecture a system that provides the necessary interface between state legacy systems and SAFER. The new system, called the Commercial Vehicle Information Exchange Window (CVIEW), is currently being developed and implemented as part of the CVISN prototype project in Maryland and Virginia.

CVIEW is a state-owned and operated version of the SAFER system. It gathers information from authoritative sources within the State and constructs intrastate carrier, vehicle, and driver snapshots from that data. It obtains interstate carrier, vehicle and driver snapshots from SAFER and facilitates the distribution of both types of information to the law enforcement community and other interested agencies via the ASPEN and SAFER Graphical User Interface (SGUI) applications, respectively.

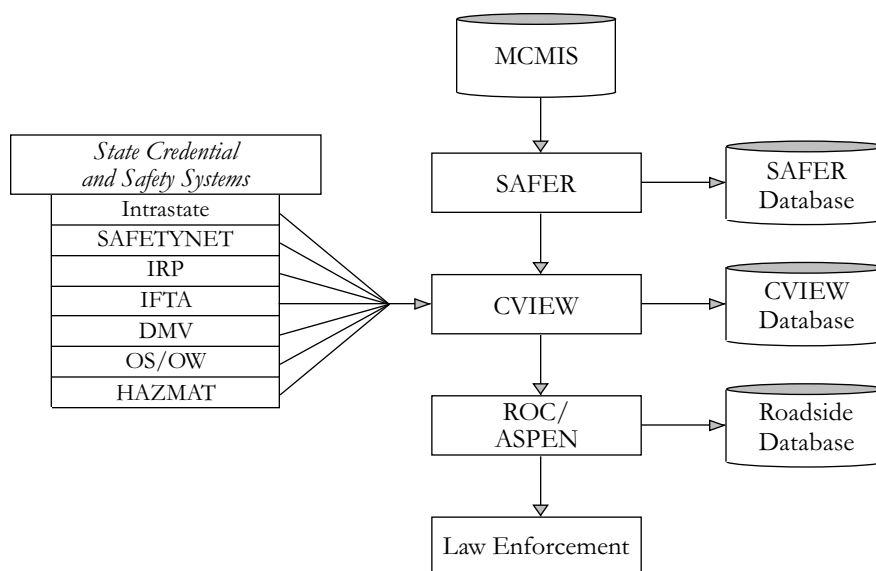
The primary motivation for developing CVIEW is to provide states with a single point of access to its intrastate safety and credential information and to provide SAFER with information about the interstate carriers, vehicles, and drivers based in the state without SAFER having to establish custom interfaces to each of the state's legacy systems. In other words, CVIEW is customized to interface with the state's legacy systems which

allows it to construct intrastate snapshots used locally and interstate snapshot segments used by SAFER. Each state's CVIEW system will exchange interstate information with other states via the SAFER system. Data exchange between CVIEW and SAFER will be accomplished via EDI transactions and/or high performance client-server links.

From the perspective of law enforcement, the CVIEW system will provide a consistent and uniform interface between the ASPEN inspection software, the state's legacy systems, and SAFER. CVIEW will be able to distinguish between inter- and intrastate information, forwarding the appropriate interstate data to SAFER while storing the intrastate information locally.

The CVIEW approach is an ideal solution for addressing data exchange at the state level. However, several issues need to be resolved before CVIEW can effectively perform these types of operations. These include how to distinguish between inter- and intrastate data, how to cross-reference carrier, vehicle, and driver data among the state's various legacy systems, and how to interface with legacy systems not owned by the state.

These and other issues will be addressed and resolved as part of the CVIEW prototype development effort in Maryland and Virginia. Based on these experiences, a clearer understanding of the issues and the level of effort required to resolve them in other states will be identified.



## ***SAFER COST ALLOCATION STRATEGIES EXAMINED***

Currently, those who request motor carrier safety information contained in FHWA's Motor Carrier Management Information System (MCMIS) pay a service fee of about \$25 per request to recover the cost of preparing and delivering a paper Carrier Profile report which is either mailed to or transmitted to the requester by facsimile. Because SAFER will provide electronic access to this information, the cost per request will be significantly lower and responses to the request will be much more timely.

Initially, SAFER will be heavily subsidized by FHWA. Much of SAFER's initial costs will be derived from the fixed costs of establishing the electronic infrastructure needed to access MCMIS data, receiving and responding to user requests for motor carrier safety information, and managing subscriptions for motor carrier safety data. Eventually, these costs will be allocated among SAFER's users. As more and more users learn about and begin to use SAFER to make safety management decisions, the cost of providing these services to users will decrease.

The SAFER business strategy planning effort sought to identify costs and to develop a rational approach for allocating those cost among SAFER's users. SAFER costs fall into three major categories: (1) telecommunications costs for transmitting information between SAFER and its users, (2) the MCMIS cost of providing motor carrier safety information (snapshots and profiles) to SAFER so that it can respond to user requests, and (3) the fixed cost of the SAFER infrastructure (equipment, facilities, personnel, supplies).

Payment for telecommunications costs will be the responsibility of each user and/or organization that performs data exchange operations with the SAFER system. These costs are expected to be relatively low, amounting to, on average, several dollars per user per week. An example of a service provided within that cost rate would be a user obtaining a weekly download of interstate carrier update records that the user defined via a subscription list. Although communication costs are expected to be low, those costs will be driven by the method employed for interacting with SAFER. For example, leased-line communications provide higher through-put but are substantially more expensive than a dial-up communications approach.

MCMIS costs will also be allocated among SAFER's users. MCMIS will charge SAFER for the weekly (eventually daily) download of carrier snapshot update records as well as for individual motor carrier profiles requested by users. SAFER will distribute those costs among users requesting snapshot updates and profile requests. Certain types of users, i.e., the enforcement community and other state and federal agencies that provide SAFER with safety and credential information, will not be charged for data exchange services. Other users, not covered by this exception, will be required to pay for their data exchange activities. The details of how these costs will be allocated among eligible users and the rates for various data exchange services are under consideration.

***As more users learn about  
and begin to use SAFER as a  
safety data exchange system...  
user costs will decrease.***

SAFER fixed costs for equipment, facilities, supplies, and personnel are estimated to be approximately \$400,000 annually. Those costs will be allocated to eligible users as described above; FHWA will provide funding to cover exempt user costs. FHWA/OMC will also pay the cost allocated to users who make occasional requests for SAFER snapshots via the World Wide Web, estimated at about \$48,000 per year. Non-enforcement community users who are regular users of SAFER, who request carrier profiles, and/or who need safety information on many carriers will pay user fees of about \$9.00 per profile request and a TBD cost per snapshot. These fees include both an allocated portion of SAFER fixed costs and the MCMIS cost associated with obtaining snapshot updates and carrier profiles.

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## SAFER HOME PAGE: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The following is a listing of some of the most commonly asked questions regarding the SAFER Home Page. If you have any questions not covered here, please contact the SAFER Deployment Coordinator at: PROJECT\_SAFER@CPQM.SAIC.COM or via fax at (703)356-0981.

### Does it make any difference which browser I use to access the SAFER Home Page?

Yes, the best way to access the SAFER Home Page is through Netscape Navigator 3.x or Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.x. Use <http://www.safersys.org>

### Can I still get to the SAFER Home Page if I don't have Netscape Navigator 3.x or Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.x?

Although not recommended, the system has been designed to accept other browsers, but you'll need to take a slightly different route to get to the SAFER Home Page. Try the following alternate addresses to access the SAFER Home Page:

<http://www.safersys.org/nojavaquery.htm>  
<http://www.safersys.org/snpquery3.htm>

### Can I access the SAFER Home Page via <http://www.safersys.org> using an older version of a recommended browser?

Use of an older version of a recommended browser will allow you to access the site; however, results are unpredictable. While it may *appear* to be operating properly, SAFER will typically return error messages when you try to look up information.

### I tried to print a carrier's snapshot record but data items such as OOS %, Total Accidents, and Rating did not print properly.

Sorry, but this data will not print unless you're using Microsoft Internet Explorer 3.x. We expect this print problem to be corrected in the next release of Netscape Navigator.

### I tried to look up information about a carrier using the carrier's name, but SAFER informed me that no match was found.

You must enter the name of the carrier exactly as it appears in the MCMIS database, or use the wildcard character to do your search. For example, if you type the name **yellow freight** and no match is found, use the wildcard character and resubmit your request as **\*yellow freight\***.

#### Potential Users

- Enforcement
  - ~ OMC/Regions
  - ~ MCS/AP Inspectors
  - ~ State Inspection Agencies
- Commercial Carriers
  - ~ For Hire
  - ~ Private Fleets
  - ~ Independent
  - ~ Motor Coach Operators
  - ~ Carrier Associations
- Insurance/Loss Prevention
  - ~ Underwriters
  - ~ Loss Prevention Specialist
  - ~ Attorneys
- Shippers
  - ~ Automotive/Manufacturing
  - ~ Chemical
  - ~ HAZMAT
  - ~ Government
- Fleet Rental Firms
- Research
  - ~ Universities
  - ~ Safety Organizations



#### Potential Applications

- Inspection Selection
- Safety Performance Monitoring
- Safety/Accident Research
- Inspection Notification
- Inspection Results Verification
- Safety Rating Verification
- Training Diagnostics
- Vehicle/Equipment
- Carrier Retention
- Carrier Marketing
- Risk Analysis
- Underwriting Decisions
- Loss Prevention Analysis
- Fleet Financing Decisions
- Customer Service Support
- Driver Selection/Monitoring
- Safety Trend Analysis
- Legal Services Support
- Other

## SAFER COST ALLOCATION

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Costs are based on estimated usage levels. With more timely data responses and expected costs less than half the current charge for profile reports, one might reasonably expect usage levels to increase significantly. As more experience with SAFER is gained and costs are more clearly defined, user fees will be adjusted to reflect the cost of providing data exchange services. Because the majority of SAFER's costs are fixed, increased usage will drive the cost per user down to the point where the major cost factors affecting users will be communication costs and MCMIS data exchange fees.

*The SAFER System has numerous potential users and uses.*